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Author

Title

Imprint



A

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF BEDFORD, N. H.,

BEING A DISCOURSE DELIVERED

SABBATH AFTERNOON, JULY 4TH,

1841,

IN THE PRESBYTERIAN MEETING HOUSE.

BY THOMAS SAVAGE,

Pastor of the Church.

Published by Request.

MANCHESTER, N. H.
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1841.

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Some of the matter delivered in the discourse has been thrown into the Appendix, in a smaller type; some small errors have been rectified and some slight additions made at the suggestion of one or two individuals.

To the flock, among whom he has ministered, the whole is affectionately inscribed by their servant,

THE AUTHOR

Bedford, August 16, 1841.

1893

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DISCOURSE.

PSALMS 78, 5. 6. 7.

"For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.

That the generation to come might know *them*, even the children *which* should be born, *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children.

That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

It is useful at certain periods, to recal to remembrance the former times ; to review the early history of States, Towns and Communities and watch the various steps in their progress from infancy to manhood.

Such recollections of the past, have a good moral influence on the generations present and to come.

We learn in some degree, to appreciate the hardships of those who were as the pioneers of society and who first made the sound of the axe to be heard in the forest. We are better prepared to estimate the advantages we enjoy, and the responsibility that attends the possession of such advantages.

We feel that we are connected, in an important sense with those who have lived in ages past, and with those who are yet to come, that an influence must go down from generation to generation and continue to flow onward to the end of time.

More than a century has now transpired since the first settlement of some towns in our vicinity ; and it is exceedingly important, as time elapses and the aged are passing away, that we should endeavor to seize many things connected with our early history, which would otherwise be consigned to oblivion.

More than 100 years have elapsed since the first settlement of this town, since a commencement was made in the cultivation of this, then unbroken wilderness. The Indian once roamed these woods. The land we cultivate, the forests, the rivers, the mountains around us, once swarmed with a distinct race of the human family.

It would be interesting, if we could gather some information, relating to the aboriginal inhabitants of this part of the country ; but on this subject, we

have little means of information, and much is it to be regretted that there has been no historical account of the various tribes residing on Merrimac river. The Penacook tribe of Indians inhabited what is now Concord, and the country for many miles above and below on Merrimac river; and the Indians, the traces of whose settlement is still visible in this town on the banks of the river, no doubt belonged to this tribe, who with other smaller tribes acknowledged subjection to Passaconaway, who was called the great Sachem of Penacook.

They ranged the banks of the Merrimac in quest of fish and game, which then greatly abounded. The head of an arrow or fragment of a human skeleton is still occasionally thrown up in the sand or uncovered by the plough, the last traces of the red man, who hunted and fished on our waters.

The first settlers suffered many anxieties and hardships from their uncivilized neighbors.

As Bedford was for some time, one of the frontier towns, it was exposed to incursions of the Indians; but there is no recollection of more than one inhabitant of the town being killed by them.

1745 James McQuade and John Burns went to Penacook, (Concord) to purchase corn for their families, and had proceeded on their return homeward as far as Suncook, (Pembroke) when they were fired upon by a party of Indians who lay in ambush, awaiting their return. McQuade was shot dead, but Burns made his escape, by running in a zigzag direction, which method baffled the fire of his pursuers, and arrived in safety to his family. A

THE ORIGIN OF THE TOWNSHIP IS AS FOLLOWS.

1675 was the year of the first general Indian war. It was a war with the Narraganset Indians, and was known as Philip's war. It was attended with great distress and cruelties; many towns in Mass. suffered exceedingly; but the enemy was at last scattered and Philip slain.

Hutchinson in his history of Massachusetts thus relates the slaughter: "Philip fled from one swamp to another, divers times very narrowly escaping—losing one chief counsellor after another, his uncle and sister and at last his wife and son were taken prisoners. Being reduced to this miserable condition, he was killed Aug. 12, 1676, as he was flying from a pursuing party, out of a swamp, near his residence, Mt. Hope, now Bristol, R. I. One of his own men whom he had offended, and who had deserted to the English, shot him through the heart. Instead of the scalp, he cut off his right hand, which had a remarkable scar, well known to the English, and which was exhibited as a curiosity. Many of the Indian chiefs were executed at Boston and Plymouth. The people

were greatly exasperated. Every person in the two colonies, having lost a relative or near friend, but," adds the historian, "this does not excuse the cruelty."

And here let it be said, with regard to these original tenants of the soil, that we have been accustomed to speak of their cruelties ; but let us remember also their wrongs, and as they fade away before the march of civilization, let us endeavor to do justice to a much injured race.

1732 the general Court of Massachusetts in consideration of the important services of the officers and soldiers in that war, granted to them or their legal representatives, 7 townships of land as a reward. These were numbered, and it is curious to notice, that No. 1 was in Maine, now called Buxton ; No. 2 in Massachusetts, now called Westminster ; No. 3 was Amherst or Souhegan West ; No. 4 adjoined Hatfield Massachusetts ; No. 5 was Bedford, Souhegan East ; No. 6 was Templeton, Massachusetts ; No. 7 was Gorham, Maine.

Since the Indian war, a considerable time had elapsed, more than 50 years, and many of the officers and soldiers, who served in that expedition were dead.

Of 120 persons to whom these townships were granted, only 20 veterans were living in 1733. All the grantees or their representatives, assembled on Boston common, June 6, 1733 ; at which time they divided themselves into 7 distinct societies of 120 persons each, and entitled to one of these townships. From each society, 3 persons were chosen a committee who on 17th Oct., 1733, assigned the several townships among their respective societies.

Of the individuals to whom this town was assigned 57 belonged to Boston, 15 to Roxbury, 7 to Dorchester, 2 to Milton, 5 to Braintree, 4 to Weymouth, 13 to Hingham, 4 to Dedham, 2 to Hull, 1 to Medfield, 5 to Scituate and 1 to Newport. Of the original proprietors whose book of records is preserved with the town books, very few became settlers, but disposed of their claims to those who became occupants of the soil. B.

In the winter of 1737, so far as we can ascertain, the first settlement was commenced by Robert Walker and James Walker, and in the year following by John Goffe, afterwards Col., Matthew Patten, afterward Judge of Probate, and Capt. Samuel Patten and soon after by many others. They commenced their first labors near the bank of the Merrimac, on a piece of ground known as "Patten's field."

With few exceptions the early inhabitants of this town, were from the north of Ireland or from the then infant settlement of Londonderry, to which they had recently emigrated. About the middle of the 17th century, their ancestors had emigrated from Argyleshire, in the west of

Scotland, to the Counties of Londonderry and Antrim in the north of Ireland. They were warmly attached to the Presbyterian doctrine and discipline, in which the church of Scotland was united, and for which they were much indebted to the faithfulness of John Knox, the celebrated Scotch reformer, who had introduced this form of church government, a century before, from Geneva. C.

Adhering as the Scottish emigrants did to the Presbyterian church, they were exposed to the persecutions in which the Protestants of Ireland were involved, during the reign of Charles 1st and James 2d, until the period known as the British Revolution, when William ascended the throne. They then enjoyed more toleration ; but still as they dissented from the church of England, they were subject to many embarrassments and were obliged to support a minister of the established religion. They accordingly resolved to emigrate. Some arrived at Boston, some at Casco Bay, near Portland, which last were the settlers of Londonderry. This took place early in 1719.

Many towns in this vicinity were settled from this colony. Windham, Chester, Litchfield, Manchester, Bedford, Goffstown, New-Boston, Antrim, Peterborough and Acworth, together with some towns in Massachusetts, Maine, N. Scotia and Vermont, derived from Londonderry, a considerable proportion of their first inhabitants.

Many of their descendants, says Rev. Mr. Whiton, in his history of the State, "have risen to high respectability, among whom are numbered four Governors of N. H., one of the signers of the declaration of Independence, several distinguished officers in the revolutionary war, and in the last war with Great Britain, including Stark, Reid, Miller and McNiel, a President of Bowdoin College, some members of Congress and several distinguished ministers of the gospel."

Gov. Everett in his life of Gen. Stark, thus notices the colony. "These emigrants were descended from the Scotch Presbyterians, who in the reign of James, were established in Ireland, but who professing with national tenacity, a religious belief, neither in accordance with the popular faith in Ireland, nor with that of its English masters, and disliking the institutions of tithe and rent, determined to seek a settlement in America. The first party came over in 1718 and led the way in a settlement on Merrimac river. They were shortly succeeded by a large number of their countrymen, who brought with them the art of weaving linen, and first introduced the culture of the potatoe in this part of America and furnished from their families a large number of the pioneers of civilization in N. Hampshire Vermont and Maine, and some of the most useful and distinguished citizens of all these States."

This account will not be thought too great a digression, when we consider how large a proportion of the early inhabitants of the town were of Scottish origin. They are represented as being a well principled people, frugal, hardy, industrious, a people that brought with them a sacred attachment to religious institutions. - And here it is interesting to notice the similarity between the pilgrims of Plymouth and the emigrants from the north of Ireland, as respects the motives which led them to emigrate. It was no worldly ambition, it was no unhallowed thirst of gain that in either case, appears to have led these hardy men to leave the comforts and endearments of their native land and come to this western wilderness. It was, we may believe, in both cases, for the enjoyment of the rights of conscience and religious privileges that they came across the Atlantic and settled down in these forests.

1750 the town which had been called Souhegan East or Narraganset, No. 5, was incorporated under its present name and within its present limits, its territory originally extending south to Souhegan river. I am indebted to that distinguished antiquarian the late John Farmer, Esq., for a copy of the petition, which follows:—

“To his Excellency Benning Wentworth Esq., Governor and Commander in chief of his majesty’s Province of New Hampshire, and to the Honorable his majesty’s Council, assembled at Portsmouth, May 10, 1750.

“The humble Petition of the subscribers, inhabitants of Souhegan East, so called, Sheweth,”

“That your Petitioners are major part of said Souhegan, that your petitioners as to one particular persuasion in christianity, are generally of the Presbyterian denomination; that your petitioners through a variety of causes, having been long destitute of the gospel, are now desirous of taking the proper steps in order to have it settled among us in that way of discipline which we judge to tend most to our edification; that your petitioners not being incorporated by civil authority, are in no capacity to raise those sums of money which may be needful in order to our proceeding in the above important affair.

“May it therefore please your Excellency and Honors, to take the case of your petitioners under consideration, and to incorporate us into a town or district, or in case any part of our inhabitants should be taken off by any neighboring district, to grant that those of our persuasion who are desirous of adhering to us may be excused from supporting any other parish charge, than where they conscientiously adhere; we desiring the same liberty to those within our bounds, if any there be, and your petitioners shall ever pray &c.” D.

The first meeting under the charter was held 6th June, 1750, at

Matthew Patten's barn, in which Col. John Goffe presided as moderator.

What led to the choice of Bedford as the name, is not certain. It has been suggested, with probability, it might have been in compliment to the Duke of Bedford, who corresponded with Benning Wentworth, Esq. Governor of the Province, and who, as Governor, signed the charter of incorporation.

As might be expected from a people of such an origin, they made early provision for the institution of the gospel; as early as August, 1750, the town voted to give a call to Rev. Alexander Boyd to the work of the ministry and soon after, to Rev. Messrs. Alexander McDowell and Samuel McClintock; but in each case, it appears, without success.

As the privileges of religion cannot well be enjoyed without a convenient place of worship, the first settlers early turned their attention to building a house for this purpose. In this undertaking there appears to have been some delay, as is apt to be the case, for want of agreement with regard to location; and it was not until after several unsuccessful trials, that they agreed on the spot where the town-house now stands, the frame of which was raised Oct. 1755; but the house was not fully completed, additions being made from time to time, until a number of years after.

1757 Sept. 28th Rev. John Houston was ordained pastor of the church which was organized in the Presbyterian order. It may be interesting at this distance of time, to mention the ministers that took part in his ordination, found recorded in an old private Journal.

Rev. Mr. True of Hampstead offered the prayer. Rev. Mr. Parsons* of Newbury, preached from 1 Tim. I. II. "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." Rev. D. McGregor of Londonderry, gave the charge, Rev. Mr. True gave the right hand of fellowship, and Rev. Mr. White of Gloucester, concluded by prayer.

From the same source of information, it appears that Mr. Houston's text, the first Sabbath after ordination, was, "Fear not little flock, it is your father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom;" a very appropriate one, when we consider, it must have been then a small church and congregation, in the midst of a wilderness.

James Little, James Gilmoor, Benjamin Smith and William Moor constituted the first board of elders.

About this time, it appears from the town records, that sundry inhabitants of Merrimac, probably from preference for the presbyterian form,

* Father of late chief Justice Parsons of Massachusetts.

united for a number of years, with the inhabitants of this town in religious privileges.

Mr. Houston continued to fill the office of minister in the place, till 1775. This, as is well known, was a time of great excitement and enthusiasm throughout the whole country. This town partook largely of the patriotic feeling that prevailed, as appears from the large number of citizens, who from this place went to engage in the dangers and hardships of the revolutionary war. E.

Their minister differed from the great body of the people in the view he took of public affairs, and on this account he ceased preaching this year, and 1778 the pastoral connexion was dissolved by act of presbytry.

It is painful to remark, that on account of his adherence to unpopular opinions, he was subjected to some unworthy treatment. Mr. Houston was educated at Princeton College N. J., where according to the catalogue, he took his degree 1753, and studied divinity with Rev. David McGregor, the second minister of Londonderry.

He was considered a sound orthodox divine, and a man of considerable native and acquired talent, but somewhat deficient as a public speaker.

He was no doubt a conscientious good man.

He was born it is said in Londonderry and died in this town 1798 aged 75. His grave-stone is seen in the old burying yard. F.

For many years after this, it does not appear that there was much that was encouraging in the state of religion.

There was a long period, during which, the town was destitute of a settled ministry. The people were supplied with preaching part of the year, but with a single exception, * not by any one individual for any length of time.

As might be expected in such a state of things, the ordinances were neglected, divisions came in and the interests of piety suffered a decline. It is a maxim, universally true, that if a people would enjoy the blessing of God and promote the best interests of themselves, and their children, it behoves them to sustain the regular institutions of religion.

"During the long period of nearly 30 years," says a native of the town an aged and respectable minister, † in a letter to me, "the people hired a great many candidates and preachers, from time to time; but I do not remember that they ever gave one a call, to settle with them. In the mean time, the cause of religion ran very low, the church was diminished and scattered, professors lived like other men, and it was scarcely known who they were, only when they came from time to time, to the communion table. As to spirituality in religion, it was scarcely to be

* Rev. Mr. Pickles from Wales, England.

† Rev. Joseph Goffe, Millbury, Massachusetts.

found; and here I would say with deep emotion, that I never knew a revival of religion in town, until of late years; and though I hope some souls were born of God, yet they were few and far between."

But the watchful providence of God surrounded the church through seasons of peril, and preserved it from the fate by which other churches in similar circumstances, have been overtaken.

Sept. 5, 1804, Rev. David McGregor was ordained to the pastoral charge of the church and congregation in Bedford. The religious aspect of things now began to change, sensibly for the better. The church as a body became more regular and consistent, affairs were conducted with a greater regard to system, additions were yearly made to their number, and the cause of piety and benevolence advanced with a steady progress.

In April, 1825, the pastoral relation, subsisting between Mr. McGregor and the church, was by mutual consent dissolved by act of Presbytery. Mr. McGregor received his education at Dartmouth College where he took his degree 1799. He studied divinity with Rev. Dr. Morrison.

His ministry it is believed was greatly blessed. He has since resided in Falmouth Maine, where he is engaged in the business of instruction.

The present pastor was installed over the church and people July 5th, 1826; Rev. J. M. Whiton, preached on the occasion.

The old meeting-house having been occupied for the worship of God, from generation to generation, for nearly 80 years, and having become unfit for use, the house in which we now worship, was erected, and Dec. 25, 1832 was solemnly dedicated to the service of God.

The church has shared with other churches in spiritual blessings; and since the settlement of the present pastor, 272 have been added by profession. G.

Comparing the present with former times, we observe those changes that in any place, will generally result from the lapse of time, and the progress of improvement. In regard to conveniences and advantages in many respects, the change is wonderfully great.

Formerly it was often necessary to go a great distance to attend meeting on the sabbath. It was not uncommon for females to ride on horseback or sometimes go on foot, and that with a young child or two, to Londonderry, to attend preaching on the Sabbath, and return the same evening.

On communion occasions, they would go from New-Boston, and even as far as Antrim to Londonderry. These seasons were very interesting, occurring only twice a year, and occupying several days. Those from out of town would arrive on Saturday, and remain till Monday; and thus an opportunity was afforded at once of renewing their social feelings, and strengthening their religious faith. H.

In regard to common school education, the change is as striking as in

almost any thing that can be mentioned. As far back as 1754, we find in our town records, the following vote in relation to schools, adopted in town meeting. "Voted to have the school kept this year, in the following manner ; beginning at the south westerly corner of the town, and to continue there one month, and then to be kept at the north easterly corner one month, and so alternately one month in each of the aforementioned places, in rotation as before mentioned, until the whole 8 months be completed." At the present time, there are 13 school houses, in each of which, on an average, school is kept, 4 or 5 months in the year ; thus offering the advantages of elementary instruction to all children, who are disposed to improve them.

There is still however much room for improvement, and it is hoped a great impulse to the cause of common school education will soon be given.

One more change may be mentioned, which is far from being a change for the better, in the observance of the Sabbath.

This subject evidently engaged more attention formerly, than now ; as would appear from the following article in the town-meeting warrant for 1779.

"As for some time past, the Sabbath has been greatly profaned, by persons travelling with burthens upon the same, when there is no necessity for it ; to see whether the town will not try to provide some remedy for the same, for the future."

Among those who have been inhabitants of the town, there have been some men of considerable note.

Col. John Goffe, one of the first settlers, and the first representative of the town, commanded a regiment in the second French war. He resided some time in Manchester. He died 1786, aged 86 ; he was buried in the old grave-yard. Col. Goffe was a serious religious man. He was in the habit, when there was no preaching, of conducting religious exercises at his house on the Sabbath. He sang and prayed, and read a discourse selected, to the edification of the audience. Some, who are now living, attended these meetings. 1.

Hon. Matthew Patten was born in Ireland, May 19th, 1719. In 1738, came to this place, was second Judge of Probate in Hillsborough County and the first, after the revolution. He represented this town and Amherst in 1776 and '77, was appointed Justice of the peace 1750, and was continued in that office, till his death, which occurred suddenly Aug. 27, 1795. He was father of David Patten Esq. a distinguished surveyor.

In the possession of his daughters now living, there is a very curious manuscript journal of his, continued regularly through 40 or 50 years in a very legible hand. It is a very minute diary of whatever happened,

private or public, common domestic occurrences, state of the weather, preaching on the Sabbath &c. K.

Hon. John Orr, was for many years, a useful citizen, both in public and private life. The following account is taken chiefly from "Farmer's and More's Collection's."

"He was in the battle of Bennington under Gen. Stark, and received a wound in the thigh, in the early part of the engagement. The ball entered just above the knee joint, and lodged in the bone, which was much fractured, and large pieces were afterwards extracted. In consequence of the wound, the knee joint became stiff and he was a cripple, the remainder of his life.

As a man, a magistrate and a christian, but few have been more esteemed, or could be more deeply lamented. He possessed a strong discriminating mind, a sound judgment and retentive memory, which eminently fitted him to discharge the duties of the several stations which he filled." He died Jan. 1823, aged 75. The following inscription is upon his grave-stone. "As an officer of the church, distinguished for a discriminating judgment, and an uncommon decision, candor and meekness.

He lived and died in an unshaken, practical adherence to the faith once delivered to the saints."

Hon. Benjamin Orr, son of the preceding, was a distinguished member of the bar, in Maine, and at one time a member of Congress from that state. He died a few years since in Brunswick Me. Others might be mentioned of the living, and the dead, whose names reflect credit on their native town, and who would furnish materials for interesting biographical notices.

An unusually large number belonging to the town have enjoyed the advantages of collegiate education, and have filled the various learned professions with credit and usefulness. L.

The agricultural and general condition of the town has been prosperous, and the inhabitants distinguished for sobriety of manners. They have contributed to people the valley of the West, and a few years ago quite a colony went from this place to Rock River, Wisconsin, and settled in what is now called Beloit.

As respects health, the town will rank well with other towns in the country, the average annual number of deaths, for the last 15 years, having been about 20, not a large proportion for a population of 15 or 1600. M.

Some instances of longevity may be noticed. Mr. Benjamin Smith, one of the first elders, came with his wife, from the north of Ireland in 1738, he then being 19 and she 21 years of age. They were married in Londonderry, soon after their arrival, after which, they came to

this town, where they lived together in a married state, 72 years. Mrs. Sarah Coburn aged 96. She mentioned to the writer, that she remembered hearing Whitefield, in her younger days in Dracut. Her descendants are numerous by the name of French. Mrs. Margaret Aiken died at the age of 97, having been a professor of religion more than 70 years, and had 12 children baptized in the old meeting-house.

As we draw to a close, let a remark or two be indulged, on the duties devolving on us who live at this day ; what a responsibility is resting on the present generation. Privileges and institutions, the most important and sacred, have been transmitted down to us, from those who first came to these western shores.

They venerated the Sabbath—they valued the institutions of religion. They provided for the worship of God, that the generations to come might know the statutes of the Lord. They laid the foundation of schools and seminaries of learning. They contended for great principles of liberty, and we this day, enjoy great blessings, civil, literary and religious. But let us remember, it is depending under God on the faithfulness, of the present generation, whether they who shall be living, long after we shall be gathered to our fathers, shall be blessed with free institutions, the word and ordinances of the gospel, a generation to serve the Lord.

The generations of former years, where are they ? where are they, who once lived and moved and acted, in the places and on ground on which we tread ? They are all gathered to their fathers. As one generation has passed away, another has succeeded, and as we look forward to future years, where will those be who are engaged in the active walks of life ?

Let the young remember their obligations ; on them, in a great degree, reposes the hope of coming years. Let them remember, it is religion, that is the glory of New-England, it is religion, that has made her what she is, that it is such scenes, as the poet of Scotland has so beautifully depicted, that is the glory of any land :

“Their cheerful supper done—wi’ serious face,
 “They round the ingle, form a circle wide,
 “The sire turns o’er wi’ patriarchal grace,
 “The big ha’ Bible, ance his father’s pride,
 “His bonnet, rev’reently is laid aside,
 “His lyart haffets, wearing thin an’ bare,
 “Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 “He wales a portion with judicious care,
 “And ‘let us worship God’ he says wi’ solemn air.
 “Then kneeling down to Heaven’s eternal King,
 “The saint, the father, and the husband prays.”

How imperative the obligations resting on us all.

“For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. That the generations to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children. That they might set their hope in God. and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.”

APPENDIX.

A. It is related that McQuade's mother soon after let one of the neighbors have some beans, which were brought along in a bag, and a ragged bullet was found among them.

B. The proprietors probably had some trouble on account of the famous Mason claim, or at least apprehended it, as I have met with a copy of an instrument confirming their rights, from which the following is an extract.

"At a meeting of the proprietors of the lands purchased of John Tufton Mason Esq., in the province of N. H., held at Portsmouth, in said province Nov. 9, 1718; voted that the rights of the original proprietors of Souhegan East, otherwise called Narraganset No. 5, be and are hereby confirmed to them, according as the lots, have been already surveyed and laid out."

C. Presbyterianism was designed in its principal features, to be opposed to episcopacy, which gave too much power to the bishop, while Presbyterianism conferred upon the people, a larger share in the affairs of the church. Beside this, it was more simple and spiritual in its mode of worship. Between Presbyterianism and Evangelical Congregationalism, there is little or no difference, except in the form of government. Every Congregational church, as respects ecclesiastical government, is a separate and independent body, while a Presbyterian church, is under the care and subject to the control of presbytery, which in its turn is subject to the synod, and that again to the general assembly. The pastor and some elders, constitute what is called a session, for the transaction of all church affairs.

D. The following are the names of the signers of the petition, and the certificate of commission.

Samuel Miller,	Thomas Chandler,	John Goffe,
William Moor,	John McDugle,	John Orr,
John Riddell,	Samuel Patten,	John Moorehead,
Thomas Vickere,	Alex. Walker,	James Little,
Matthew Little,	Gan Riddell,	Robert Gilmoor, Sen
James Moor,	Benjamin Smith,	David Thompson,
John Tom,	John McLaughlin,	James McKnight,
James Kennedy,	William Kennedy,	Hugh Riddell,
Robert Gilmoor,	Fergus Kennedy,	Daniel Moor,
Richard McAllister,	John Burns,	John Clark,
James Walker,	Gerard Rowen,	Robert Walker,
John Bell,	John McQuige,	Matthew Patten,
John McLaughlin, Sen.	Patrick Taggart,	

"These are to certify, that we the above subscribers do commission John Goffe Esq., and Mr. Samuel Patten, to present this petition, in order to obtain incorporation for us, according to their instructions from us the subscribers,

Dated May 10th, 1750.

JAMES LITTLE, Clerk

E. In the Revolutionary war, this place furnished a large number of citizens, who united in opposing the oppression of Great Britain, and in common with their fellow citizens, were zealous, in sharing the dangers and hardships to which they were exposed.

Their zeal and patriotism were manifested by a ready compliance with the requisitions of Congress, and the orders of the provincial convention.

F. An incident illustrative of the spirit of that exciting period, was related to me by an old inhabitant, since dead.

Rev. Mr. Emerson of Pepperell, of strong revolutionary feelings, was passing through town and called to pass the night with Mr. Houston. Knowing probably what his sentiments were, and seeing that he made use of tea, at that time an unpatriotic beverage, declined sitting down at the same table, and had one provided in another room, and even then, as my informant added, declined uniting in a common blessing.

G. In the year 1813, there was more than ordinary attention to religion, also in 1831, and at one or two subsequent periods. The stated Thursday prayer-meeting was commenced Oct. 11, 1827, and has continued uninterruptedly from that time to the present.

The following are the names of the elders, with the date of their election. The first board is mentioned in the discourse.

1786 Silas Dole,	1803 Phineas Aiken,	1817 Moody M. Stevens.
" James Wallace,	" William Moor,	1832 Thomas Atwood,
" John Orr,	1817 Stephen Thurston,	" Samuel McQuesten.
1803 David McQuesten,	" John French,	" Daniel L. French,
" John Craig,	" John Orr Houston,	1836 Daniel Mack.
" John Houston,	" Richard Dole,	

1804, John Holbrook, bringing from the 3d Cong. Church in Cambridge, (now Brighton,) a certificate of his regular standing as deacon in that church, was added to the session. His death occurred very suddenly, Sabbath Dec. 12th, 1835. Having attended meeting and listened to the exercises with great attention, and even found the last hymn, he died just as he left the house of God, a most solemn providence and loud call to the congregation. The text selected at his funeral was "Heb 11, 21. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, * * * * worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

II. The writer remembers 20 years ago, being present at a communion season in a Scotch settlement, in the State of Mississippi, which might have been similar to what they were in this country 60 years ago.

I. He is said to have been descended collaterally from Goffe, who was one of the Judges that condemned Charles 1st. He was a Major Gen., under Cromwell, and on the death of the Protector, and restoration of Charles 2d, he fled to this country. Several of the Judges suffered death; and he with another who came over with him, was pursued, and a reward offered for them. But they concealed themselves till the search was over. Goffe was concealed some years at Hadley. While there, it is said a singular incident took place. In 1675, the town of Hadley, was alarmed by Indians on the Sabbath, in the time of public worship, and the people were in the utmost confusion. While in this state of disorder, suddenly a grave elderly stranger, of venerable aspect appeared in the midst of them. In appearance and dress, he differed from the rest of the people. He immediately put a new face on things, he not only encouraged them to defend themselves, but put himself at their head, rallied, instructed and led them on to encounter the enemy, who by this means were repulsed. When the danger was over, they looked round for their deliverer, who had as suddenly disappeared. The people were left in consternation, utterly unable to account for this strange phenomenon. It appeared to them like some celestial visitant, and perhaps they were never able to explain it. It is generally believed that this courageous stranger was Goffe, who had lived incognito, in the house of the minister.

K. One or two of the entries in this diary are here given:—

"1775. July 20th was the Continental Fast, and Mr. Cook preached with us in Bedford—he preached with us last Sabbath-day, which was the first preaching we have had, since we shut the meeting-house door against Mr. Houston."

"1780, May 19th, was a thunder shower in the morning and was followed by an uncommon darkness, such as is not remembered—it was so dark, that one could not know a man but at a small distance, and we were obliged to keep a light in the chimney, to see to go about, and the night was so extraordinary dark, until 1 o'clock, that a person could not see his hand when held up, nor even a white sheet of paper. Day and night cloudy. Cause unknown. The works of the Lord are great and marvellous and past finding out, until he graciously pleases to reveal them."

L. 25 of the natives of the town have passed through a collegiate course. The following are the names with the College, and year of their graduation.

Joseph Goffe,	* D. C. 1791,	Robert Orr,	Y. C. 1820,
John Vose,	D. C. 1795,	James T. McGaw,	D. C. 1820,
Benjamin Orr,	D. C. 1798,	Isaac O. Barnes,	M. C. 1820,
† Thomas Rand,	B. U. 1804,	Cornelius Walker,	D. C. 1823,
Joseph Bell,	D. C. 1807,	Silas Aiken,	D. C. 1825,
John Walker,	D. C. 1808,	Adam Moor,	D. C. 1822,
William Gordon,	D. C. 1811,	Gilman Parker,	D. C. 1824,
William Orr,	D. C. 1816,	David Aiken,	D. C. 1830,
Adam Gordon,	D. C. 1817,	Samuel Chandler,	U. C. 1834,
John Aiken,	D. C. 1818,	John Chandler,	D. C. 1836,
Isaac Orr,	Y. C. 1818,	Peter T. Woodbury,	D. C. 1839,
Robert Riddle,	Y. C. 1819,	Selwyn B. Bowman,	D. C. 1840,
Freeman Riddle,	Y. C. 1819,		

* D. C. Dartmouth College, Y. C. Yale College, B. U. Brown University, M. C. Middlebury College, U. C. Union College Schenectady.

† Son of Rev. John Rand the first minister of Lyndeborough, who moved to this town and was a member of Harvard College, 1748.

Rev. Daniel L. French of Nelson, and Rev. Cyrus W. Wallace of Manchester, were natives of this town, and received their theological education at Gilmanton, N. H.

Three young gentlemen from this town, are now at College.

M. 1741, the first male child was born, Silas Barron, son of Capt. Moses Barron.

1745, the first framed house was built by Thomas Chandler, and the first grain-mill and saw-mill, by Col John Goffe; and by the year 1767, the population was 362; at the commencement of the revolutionary war 495, the year of the peace, 762; framed houses 93, 1800, population 1182; 1810, 1296; 1820, 1575; 1830, 1554; 1840, 1543.

There are some objects of curiosity, worthy of note. In the western extremity of the town towards chestnut hills, there is a natural curiosity that deserves notice. It is a vast fissure or opening, in a mighty mass of rock, produced by some convulsion of nature. It is 30 or 40 feet wide and more than 100 feet deep. At the bottom is a small pool of water, where in the hottest day, the warmth of the sun scarcely penetrates. There is observed in one part, an excavation in the rock bearing some resemblance to a pulpit, which has given name to the place. As I stood on the verge of this tremendous precipice, I was filled with emotions of sublimity and grandeur; and any one who should have leisure in a pleasant day, would find himself well paid, if he has any love of romantic scenery, by a visit to this sublime object of nature.

A great undertaking is now in progress, a rail road bridge across the Merrimac, near Moor's Ferry, the granite for which, is obtained from a quarry, at the centre of the town



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